DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 465 974 CS 511 166

AUTHOR Hayward, Pamela A.
TITLE Public Speaking 101: In 90 Minutes or Less.
PUB DATE 1996-06-24
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Engineering Education (Washington, DC, June 23-26, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication Skills; *Curriculum Development; Engineering Education; Higher Education; Instructional Effectiveness; Introductory Courses; *Public Speaking; Student Educational Objectives; *Student Needs; *Workshops
IDENTIFIERS Oral Presentations

ABSTRACT

Recently, when employers of entry-level engineers were asked to prioritize the need for further instruction, over 60% of these employers identified communication skills as the primary curricular element needing increased emphasis. Two of the top 10 required skills ranked as important to engineering practice related to making oral presentations. Public speaking, however, is not always required at the university level for engineering students. In an attempt to rectify this situation in a senior-level electrical engineering course at a midwestern university, a team of instructors in the speech communication department was approached to develop a public speaking workshop. The challenge was to condense what would normally be an entire semester's worth of speech instruction into a 90-minute workshop for the engineering students. This paper describes the workshop's development and implementation, including assessment of the situation, goals for the students, and the overcoming of public speaking anxiety. The paper notes that students were highly participative during the workshops and evaluations immediately following the workshops were positive. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 465 974

Public Speaking 101: In 90 Minutes or Less

Pamela A. Hayward

Paper presented at the American Society for Engineering Education
Annual Conference (Washington, DC, June 23-26, 1996)

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

P. A. Hayward

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CS 511 166

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Public Speaking 101: In 90 Minutes or Less

Pamela A. Hayward

Lake Superior State University

The Challenge

Having adequate communication skills is becoming more important than ever in the technical workforce. Recently, employers of entry level engineers were asked to prioritize the need for further instruction. Over 60% of these employers identified communication skills as the primary curricular element needing increased emphasis.[1]

When ranking the top 30 types of communication, by importance, to engineering practice; two of the top 10 required skills relate to making oral presentations.[2] However, despite this increasing need for engineers to demonstrate proficiency in oral presentations, public speaking instruction is not always required at the university level for these students. Although some students may have already taken a speech class prior to entering the university, additional training in public speaking is necessary

because speechmaking in college and the real world differs markedly from what most students learn in high school.[3]

Students unskilled in public speaking, find themselves in a difficult position when asked to make an oral presentation in an engineering course. Although the project that the student is presenting may be well-designed poor presentational skills can detract from his/her engineering expertise and hurt his/her credibility in the course. The student is placed in a no-win situation. His/her project grade hinges on his/her ability to make an effective oral presentation, however the student has been given no formal instruction in the necessary skills.

In an attempt to rectify this no-win situation for students in a senior-level electrical engineering course at a midwestern university, a team of instructors in the speech communication department was approached to develop a public speaking workshop. The challenge for this workshop team was to condense what would normally be an entire semester's worth of speech instruction into a 90-minute, evening workshop for the engineering students.

The Assessment

The key to any successful training program is an assessment of the situation prior to implementing a workshop In order to get a better feel for the problem at hand, a member of the workshop team met with the course professor to find out what difficulties students had with their presentations in the past. The presentation requires the seniors to give a half-hour group presentation of the project that they have been working on all semester. During the presentation, students are expected to act as if they are a "design team" showing their project to senior members of "the firm." Each group presentation also requires the use of an overhead projector and transparencies.

The professor and several of his teaching assistants identified the primary problems with student presentations in previous semesters. They explained that students exhibited a high level of anxiety, a lack of organizational focus, poor delivery skills, and awkward use of the group presentation format. It was also explained that transparencies were poorly prepared, and students were not professionally dressed.

In order to better assess the students' levels of experience and comfort in public speaking, a short survey was

administered by the workshop team to 20 students in one of the course discussion sections. Results indicated that only two of the 20 respondents had ever taken a public speaking course and only eight of the 20 students indicated they felt "somewhat" or "very comfortable" when giving an oral presentation.

Workshop Goals

Once the assessment was complete, the next step was to develop overall goals for the 90-minute workshop. It was decided that it would be best to run four workshops with approximately 20 students in each, as opposed to one large workshop for all 85 students. This way each student could become directly involved in the learning experience and the trainer-student ratio would be kept at a manageable level. In training students to improve their public speaking skills, it is important that everyone in attendance get a chance to actually speak.

Three primary behavioral objectives were developed by the workshop team:

1. To introduce students to tactics for coping with anxiety about speaking.

2. To introduce students to principles of effective delivery including the design and use of visual aids in an oral presentation.
3. To introduce students to principles of organization relevant to a group and/or individual oral presentation.

Workshop Implementation

The workshop consisted of several sections. The goals of the first portion were to establish rapport between the instructor and the audience, to communicate an outline of the workshop to the students, and to give everyone the opportunity to speak at the beginning of the workshop. The instructor was able to establish rapport by generating interest in public speaking and its value in today's technologically advanced world. After the goals of the workshop were introduced, each person was asked to introduce him/herself and to describe one characteristic of a speaker they enjoy or admire. While the students shared names and characteristics, the instructor kept a running list on the board. Common threads between these effective speakers on the list were shared.

The second section of the workshop was a fairly brief one. Participants were given some quick pointers on how best to work as a group for this type of oral presentation.

In order to discuss speaking anxiety and its impact on presentations, participants were asked to generate a list of physical "symptoms" of speaking anxiety. This activity was followed by an explanation of what causes speaking anxiety, as well as realistic tips the students could use before and during their speeches. Students were also asked to share any tips they had discovered on their own for coping with anxiety.

It is impossible for students to learn all there is to know about effective delivery skills in such a short period of time; however, a list of some of the most important elements of strong delivery were pointed out. It was stressed that students should allow their commitment to their ideas and to the audience to be revealed in voice and body. Included in this section of the workshop was an explanation of how to dress appropriately for a presentation to "senior members of the firm."

Time was also spent on guidelines for using visual aids. Students were instructed to plan their visual aids, to practice with their visual aids, and then to effectively present their

visual aids. The course professor had provided the workshop team with many ineffective transparencies from past presentations. Students were asked to explain why each visual aid was unsuitable as it was shown. Suggestions to improve the imperfect aids were also generated by the students.

After discussing visual aids, the instructor discussed effective presentation organization. Once again, a semester's worth of material was condensed to its most essential elements in the accompanying handout.

Finally, the workshop concluded with two self-reflective handouts for the students. They were provided with a self-critique checklist to use as they were practicing. They were also asked to fill out a personal goals sheet. This worksheet asked students to identify their strengths and weaknesses as a speaker. They were also required to set several public speaking goals for this assignment. It was important that students focus not only on the areas they wanted to improve, but to remind themselves of their strengths as a presenter.

Conclusion

Although a 90-minute workshop on public speaking skills is not the equivalent of taking an entire course, it did prove to be beneficial to the students. Students were highly participative during the workshops and evaluations immediately following the workshops were positive. Once the presentations were over that semester, the workshop team received feedback from the professor that the presentations were greatly improved over previous semesters.

Ideally, engineering students should be exposed to more than 90 minutes of oral presentation instruction. However, even 90 minutes of exposure is helpful. If students are not required to take a public speaking course as part of their program, a workshop can assist in developing confidence and skills for their oral presentations.

Note: The author would like to acknowledge the other members of the workshop team: Ann Darling, Joni Elsenpeter, Brad Kolar and Kathy Sturgis.

References

1. Frederick L. Hart and James E. Groccia, "An Integrated, Cooperative Learning Oriented Freshman Civil Engineering Course: Computer Analysis in Civil Engineering," Paper presented at the Freshman Year Experience Conference (Columbia, SC, February 18-22, 1994): 3.
2. Thomas Huckin and Leslie Olsen, Technical Writing and Professional Communication for Nonnative Speakers of English. 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991): 24.
3. Ruth Anne dark. Speech Communication 101: Principles of Effective Public Speaking. (Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing Company, Fall 1994): 6.

PAMELA A. HAYWARD

Pamela A. Hayward is an Assistant Professor of Speech Communication at Lake Superior State University. Her primary area of research is Instructional Communication. Before coming to Lake Superior State University, she taught at the University of Illinois.

CS 511 166

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
(OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center
(ERIC)

Reproduction Release

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Public Speaking 101: In 90 Minutes or Less	
Author(s): Pamela A. Hayward	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date: Presentation: June 24, 1996

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign in the indicated space following.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
Level 1	Level 2A	Level 2B
☑	☐	☐
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche, or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: Pamela Hayward	Printed Name/Position/Title: Pamela A. Hayward, Assoc Prof.	
Organization/Address: Augusta State University 2500 Walton Way Augusta, GA 30904	Telephone: 706-729-2048	Fax:
	E-mail Address: phayward@aug.edu	Date: 5-24-02

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

http://eric.indiana.edu/www/submit/specform/index.html 5/23/2002